

MAUREEN'S

At Glasgow Cross

and other poems



by
Freddy Anderson

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At Glasgow Cross

Poems by
Freddy Anderson

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AT GLASGOW CROSS

A Maclean is at yuir banquet
This vigorous spoken poetry of *Fowrsome Reel*, a potent agent in the contemporary folksong revival, reappears to superb advantage in one of Freddy's finest poems 'Bonnymuir'. By the time he wrote this splendid ballad, which never fails to gain warm applause when he declaims it, Freddy had mastered the 'feel' and the rhythms of Scots traditional ballad-poetry; this means that he had effectively bridged the idiomatic divide between his Ulster poetry and the kindred but separate literary tradition of his adopted country.

Another 'bridge poem' is Glen Masson, written after Freddy heard of the tragic fate of an orphaned boy from Mull whose bones were found in an Argyll glen. Glen Masson is in Cowal; like Glen Etive and Glendarnell it is mentioned in the Irish tale of *The Sons of Uisneach*, of which the well known Gaelic song 'Deidre's Farewell to Scotland' forms a part. The very name, therefore, recalls this old Scottish-Irish connection; using it as a springboard, Freddy has written a poem which encompasses the closely-related, but non-identical twin tradition. Indeed, it's a poem which could easily have been composed on either side of the Moyle.

Another idea that springs to mind is that Glen Masson lies not far from the Holy Loch, and that brings us by a leap to Freddy's political poetry. Like many other young writers in the West of Scotland, he threw himself whole-heartedly in the early '60s into the struggle against Polaris and the unwanted American bases on the Clyde. Responding to Morris Blythman's appeal for songs and singers, he came up trumps with *The Polls of Argyll*. This was much sung, and it appeared in several of Morris's anti-Polaris songbooks, including 'Ding Dong Dollar'.

Since then he has written many other hard hitting political poems, with the same target in his sights, and nobody reading them can doubt either his unflinching commitment to International Socialism, or his ability to deliver formidable propaganda broadsides. Some may consider his world-view too perfervid to take in, and put into focus, all the deep paradoxical complexities of our present human situation on this beleaguered planet, but no-one (I am quite sure) would question the deeply felt 'savage indignation' which animates his political poetry. It is anti-Fascist engagement, without fear or compromise; in his hatred of cant, hypocrisy and craven self-interest he belongs to a long line of courageous radical poets whose most famous members include Byron and Burns - not forgetting Woody Guthrie.

In this long rebellious line Freddy has earned an honourable place.

Hamish Henderson

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Wake (on the occasion of
the Irish 'Republic') 1949

I came in from the west with the wet rain filling the tarpaulin with
mountain pools, up the Clyde to Glasgow town, with the harvesters
glumly on green chests as old as the hills of Donegal, a drunken soldier
groggy as the white swirl of the wake, a little lass of two, red ribboned and
lonely... God, how we cattle stank in the close foul h~id.

If this was pleasant I would make a rhyme for you all. I would bring in
the birds, the stretching beaks of the gulls out of a white cloud down to
the shadowed water with the chance of a bite swooping down from the
hungry circus keen eyes on a salt soaked crust... I would mention the
waves, riders with dancing plumes and the old man aft with a stick
watching it with deep eyes, deeper than the sea, on his way home.

Don't let the picture cards deceive! It was cold, like a wet post in a
wintry lane with the thin pine of Scotland on either side as the snail ship
wearily crawled up to the womb of the Clyde.

The lads from the thatched homes by the sea sat silently, no Crusoe
among them now or man of great adventure working in brown foreign
fields a year for money and back to the boosted land. We are sailing third
class to Glasgow a tenth of the ship in our hands with church bells ringing
in Ireland, ringing of freedom with the colleens of Ireland singing and
jiving there on O'Connell Bridge with the Dublin trumpeters thriving on
hot air from the Dail.

We are moving out of the parish when hunger calls.

The Glasgow Folk

A song

I wandered the pavements of Glasgow,
The vennels and wynds of the city,
Streets that have known such sorrow,
Hearts that have known such pity,
And I'm proud to have lived there among them,
And rich is the source of my pride,
For you'll not find more warm-hearted people
Than the folk on the banks of the Clyde.

I have known the back-street doss house,
And the queue for the soup in George Square,
I'm not ashamed of misfortune,
With the poor I found deep friendship there!
Some cities are noted for splendour,
But a fact that can ne'er be denied -
This world knows no kinder, nor better
Than the folk on the banks of the Clyde.

I've rambled through Paddy's old Market
And dandered way down by the Green,
And deep in the shadows of Calton
The graves of the Martyrs I've seen,
The Barras, the house in the High Street,
And a hundred things other beside
That tell the brave story of Glasgow
And the folk on the banks of the Clyde.

I came over the sea here from Ireland
And a welcome I found at your door,
Such joy fills my heart that I met you
And that feeling will last evermore:
Though I've only my wee song to give you,
Nowhere in the world would I bide
But here in the dear heart of Glasgow
And the folk on the banks of the Clyde.

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In England they call us the hard men -
Yes, we're hard on the tyrant and toff
Who have thrived on the backs of the workers
And we're telling them now to get off.
They call us all rebels and Reds here,
We answer their charges with pride
We fight for real Freedom and Justice
For the folk on the banks of the Clyde.

A bright Day is dawning the world o'er
When Peace will be won on this Earth
When women and men shall be equals
In the Era that's coming to birth!
Let heaven take care of its angels,
'Tis here I'm contented to bide
And I wouldn't exchange all your Edens
For the folks on the banks of the Clyde.

At Glasgow Cross

At Glasgow Cross on a dreich, cold evening,
I watched some pleased people pass,
Doctor, tailor, saint and sailor,
True love and his lass,
But each sweetened taste was tainted there
By a lonesome river-cry,
And kind folk said it was a child
The world was passing by.

At Partick Cross, my heart was sickened
In a one-side, shadowed street,
The world's distress and loneliness
In the imprint of men's feet;
Hastened I to the river-side,
I held that child as mine,
More meaningful than miracles
Of water into wine.

And I raised him in the night-sky there
With the stars above his head,
And shone those eyes, oh, brighter far
Than anything I said,
"This city, child, your fathers built!
This city's yours to own
And never bow to any man,
The pulpit or throne!

Bring down the tints of rainbow
And raise the tone of earth!
Sing gladness that our base Age dies!
Be proud of Mankind's birth!
In every land across the globe,
A glorious Dawn you'll see,
And live in days that usher in
the end of Poverty!"

In old George Square, as the night wore on,
I heard poor beggars moan;

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The marble effigies are not
The only hearts of stone.
In lieu of the pillared men I'd raise
A monument to Pity -
Two tiny hands that battered on
The conscience of the city.



A Song of Paddy's Market

I'll sing you a song of the Market,
old Paddy's way down by the Green,
where Watt got his Newcommen engine
and the Wrights their grand flying machine;
there's Kilmarnock editions, old masters,
Noah's Ark and a pileful of junk,
pieces of eight and an anchor
from the year the Armada was sunk,
boomerangs, cockatoos and a gurdy,
you name it, they have it in store,
the lid of the tomb of a mummy,
or the breeks of a brave matador,
knick-knacks, bric-a-brac and fine tricketts
that no other place can be seen,
are there to be had for the asking
in Paddy's way down by the Green.

Sure McAllister purchased his plaid there,
himself that danced for the Queen,
and MacPherson's most famous old fiddle
it came from a stall near the Green!
Or maybe you'll want whigmaleeries,
or a well-chamfered bit for a pound,
and if you've run short of a chanty,
you'll find there are dozens around.
And many's the laddie's first trousers
were cut down from the polis discards,
the legs fitting fine to a frazzle,
tho' the waist was too wide - by a yard.
You may boast of your Goldbergs and Woolies,
but nothing ava have ye seen,
unless you've gone Saturday-shopping
in Paddy's way down by the Green.

Some goods they say fell off a lorry,
and swear they seen it themself',

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sure, if you're up bright and early,
they'll sell ye the lorry itself';
'twas at Paddy's the crafty wee moocher
the Suspension Brig sold for a song,
and when the Yank paused in suspicion
he threw in for a bargain the Tron.
Naw, that's but the patter o' Glesca,
and goes by the way of a joke,
there's never the soul down at Paddy's
gets landed a pig in a poke,
for it's there that I met with my dearie,
what a bargain I got wi' my Jean,
and I help her to carry her bundle
to Paddy's way down by the Green.

Poor Glasgow's being bulldozed to pieces,
and half of it razed to the ground,
that demolishing gang in the Chambers
want to leave nothing around,
the Met and the Queens and the Palace,
(next on the list who can tell?)
as Glasgow's transformed to a car-park
and our city a big empty shell.
But no-one can oust 'Paddy's Market',
he baffled the experts around,
yes, Paddy out-witted the planners
when he placed all his goods on the ground,
and folk will aye come from all quarters,
Tam, Dick and Harry be seen
wi' Jock Tamson's bairns as they gather
at Paddy's way down by the Green.

In Comedie Lane, Garthamlock - To Nancy

(A decade before the Housing Scheme)

I came unto this land to-day
With lonesome heart for my lost love,
And underneath these sun-capped trees,
I softly sing of memories -
Music these fields once held,
Though unaware I walked,
Filling my heart with still vague dreams.

By my unheeding side she walked,
A queen in her own soft domain,
Drinking the beauty with her eyes
The grass of the earth
And the swift skies gave,
And all the wonders that she saw
She added to with child-like awe,
That in its innocence was born
A kinship with the morning dew.
Her heart was glad that it should be
This realm was here
For other eyes to see.

And as I walked,
My castles turning stone,
My young love passed
Into the greenness of the grass
And I was left alone.
Solitary I search the lane,
And seek in furrows in the field
And beg the tender earth to yield
The secret of her hiding-place.

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Lines on the Ramshorn Kirkyard

Strange oasis in the city,
Neat and proud and well-preserved,
Lies in the Ramshorn kirkyard!
In it the dust of men who made Glasgow great,
Who sealed by a mighty word
The fate of some hapless weaver,
Who windward or with the breeze
Sent vast cargoes on the seas,
Or summoned armies to dispute
Both lowly cause and high repute
Edging from the pavements grey
All lesser mortals in their way.
How low they lie!

Time, wind and weather,
Conspiring together,
Have all but effaced their name.
Their fame remains in tarnished history book
Or adorning some neuk in a seemingly heartless city.
Mostly they were without pity,
Creating their image and challenge to fame
And tears were no part of it;
They never cried 'Shame'
When Wilson's grey head hung high on his Cross,
Nor crept under darkness to Baird's distraught mother
Mourning the loss of her patriot son.

They carved out their glory in dross,
Dreaming their splendour and fame
Would remain like the story forever.
How low they lie!
And under the darkening sky,
The offices loom
To send them down deeper in shadow.

The Love Ballad

Come gather round me, town bred folk
and listen to my tale
I was born in Monaghan of the little hills and vales.
My mother kept a fruit shop, my father he ran wild
and I became in the village street an anxious daring child.

With little boats I one day played upon the silver lake;
I saw the otter in the reeds chasing the screaming drake
I heard the banshee howling - oh what a howl had she
when the night-wind whispered to the ford
among the dark beech trees.

I arose when the night wind whispered over the shallow stream
and screaming now was the child in me
alone in the woods and wild:
here I bide on the mountainside, my cheek on the cheek of the grass
while you who said you were my love
riding my sky may pass.

And as I walked,
My mother's name I heard
My mother's name I heard
into the grasslands of the grass
And I was left alone.
Butterfly I caught the day
And kept the tender worm in my hand
The worm of my childhood.

The Connolly Ballad

Oiney Hoy stands the day long swearing
at the gawking gapes of Carricktee
that he'll drown himself in a six-foot bog hole
and set all holy Ireland free.

The men of '98 and Ulster
gather round the diddling clown
while rifle shot and lonely cry
rise in the heart of Dublin town.

Oiney Hoy stands the day long swearing,
the sweat comes out of the clefts in his brow
in the meadows, you, James Connolly,
has wandered as a boy.

These are the men who were your brothers
linked against the Hungry Wind,
standing now in a meadow staring -
staring blind.

Oiney Hoy from the bog is turning
his empty face to the jeering crowd;
they cannot see the soft rain falling
in the clouds that drift at Carrickatee.

They cannot see the heart of Irish dead still burning,
the cream of Ireland's mothers mourning
their few sons' gallantry.

Oiney Hoy is a byword now
in Ballybay of Connolly's birth,
enough to set the cobbles ringing
with strange unholy mirth.

But where's the word for Connolly
in the tolling Angelus bell,
with cream-faced traitors sanctified
and Ireland's saints in hell?

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Glen Masson

On the green slopes of Glen Masson
 lies the lonely little boy;
 the Winter snow now falls on him
 away from human joy,
 and far below him in the glen
 a phantom window gleams;
 he ne'er shall see his home again,
 Bunessan of his dreams.

Cold and cruel are these hills,
 there moves no living thing,
 you'd never dream this bleak white waste
 could feel the breath of Spring;
 and in the grip of Masson's arms,
 the little boy lies still,
 and every blade of Summer green
 turns white upon the hill.

Then slowly weary Winter glides
 unwilling to the Spring
 and all the valley now awakes
 in nature's blossoming:
 the flowers peep and sparkling streams
 cascade the pebble stones
 as Masson sings a song of life
 around his whitened bones.

This poem describes the sad fate of an orphaned lad from Mull, who run away from various foster homes on the mainland in an effort to return home to his island. The discovery of the unidentified bones led to a Government enquiry.)

Bonnymuir

A Tribute to the Brave Men of 1820

I am a Calton weaver and simple is my plea
 Not to be tied forever to four posts of poverty;
 The grim dark days o' Castlereagh have settled with their blight,
 Though the sun shines down on Glasgow town,
 It seems eternal night.

We tried to make a union then, our scanty rights defend;
 The cotton and tobacco lairds its ruin did intend:
 They hired an Informer - Richmond was his name,
 And bribed with gold our Cause he sold to misery and shame.

'Twas early in the April and the Springtime o' the year,
 As I went down the Ladywell, a great crowd did appear;
 They read a notice on the wall: Tae Arms! Tae ARms! - it cried,
 'Twas there that Andra Hardy stood and Tyranny defied.

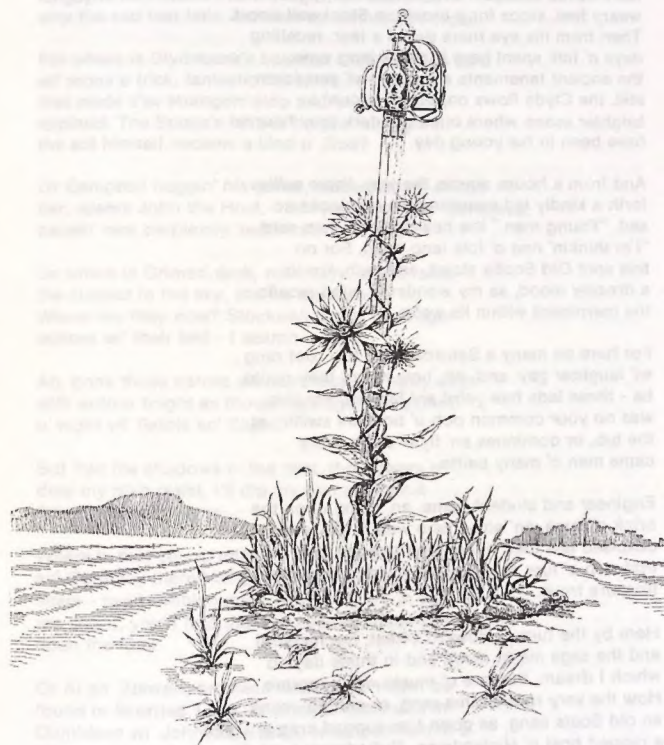
As we went up by Carronside, ah, what a sad, brave sight,
 A little band o' marching men to match a nation's might:
 With only pikes and staves half-armed, a weavers' poor platoon,
 But hearts so brave to stand the waves of sabre and dragoon.

Oh, there's dancing in the Tontine now, the bells toll our defeat,
 And the rich who cowered with their gear now strut the open street,
 And saintly ministers thank God how he preserved the State,
 Gave it relief though bowed with grief the poor o' Gallowgate.

As we came in by Stirling, you'd hear the clanking chain,
 The poor gaunt Calton weaver lads at Bonnymuir were taken;
 They hanged two in the castle, Baird and Hardy were their names:
 Though turned to mould is Richmond's gold, untarnished lives their
 fame!

The remainder were in irons clamped and banished o'er the waves,
 Neath the Southern Star in a land afar, you'll find their patriot graves,
 And Jamie Wilson o' Strathaven Vale, a man advanced in years,
 Nigh Glasgow Cross his life he lost among the people's tears.

Farewell bold Calton weaver lads! On Castlereagh my curse!
 His end in bloody suicide had murder as its source;
 Farewell brave lads o' Glasgow who died your land 'o save!
 Auld Scotia's rose in blossom grows aboon the weavers' grave.



Old Scotia

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Years ahead, lets us draw the scene: An aged man leaves Glasgow Green, and slowly then on weary feet, stops for a breath in Stockwell street. Then from his eye there drops a tear, recalling days o' folk spent here in times lang syne; the ancient tenements are gone; wi' smeddum still, the Clyde flows on, but all aroun' a brighter scene where once but dark grey haunts have been in his young day.

And from a house across the way, there sallies forth a kindly lad enquiring why he looks so sad. "Young man," the bearded one then said, "I'm thinkin' noo o' folk lang dead. For on this spot Old Scotia stood, and, ach, I'm in a dreamy mood, as my wanderin' mind recalls the merriment within its walls.

For here on many a Saturday, the low roof rang wi' laughter gay, and, oh, how merry they could be - these lads frae yaird an' factory. For this was no your common pub o' boozers swillin' at the tub, or dominoes an' flyin' darts. Here came men o' many pairs.

Engineer and student came, an' some upon the brink o' fame, an' some who wealth an' fame despised lest their interest be enticed into that web o' lure so wove, talent transforms to treasure trove.

Here by the turn o' Howard Street, the minstrel and the sage might meet, and in those days o' which I dream, the lore o' music was supreme. How the very roof-beams rang, re-echoin' many an old Scots sang, as doon frae rugged crag an' glen a ragged host o' Hielandmen, Cullodenmuir made lean an' lankie, relived through strains o'

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Killiekrankie, and helped restore a nation's pride upon the busy banks o' Clyde. For here banjo, guitar an' whistle upheld the glory o' the thistle an' hairst upon the Lalland rig by magic's seen at Glesga brig. Here were lads an' lassies bright, langsyne ha'e faded frae my sight, an' that's for why the sad tear falls, induced by memories I recall.

For where is Clydebanks bearded Mick, regaled us a wi' mony a trick, fantastic hoverin's in mid-air that made e'ev strangers stop and stare, an' then applaud. The Scotia's heroes he gi'e fame gif in the act himself became a kind o' God?

Or Campbell huggin' his guitar, elbow leanin' on the bar, speers John the Host, - Iain just back frae Germanie, causin' new perplexity 'twixt truth an' boast?

Or where is Grimes' dark, rollin' eye, could raise the subject to the sky, still be mundane? Where are they now? Stockwell Street no langer echoes wi' their feet - I search in vain.

Ah, gone those names we used recite in early days with ardour bright as though tae light the gloom o' night wi' Saints an' Sages.

But frae the shadows o' the mist, tho powers o' dree my plan resist, I'll dip my pen an' mak a list, my Book o' Ages.

Where is that young minstrel pair, Harvey Tam an' Connolly there? What feasts o' music we wad share - twa Humblebums? Your party try in vain tae guard, you'd find them in your ain back-yaird come doon the lum!

Or Al an' Stewart, brothers twain, who might be found in Skerries' Lane, or drinkin' Guinness in Dumblane wi' Johnstone Billy, or wi' yon hermit o' Glencoe, tastin' strange old vines that grow by Ossian's Cave an' Glendaroe would knock you silly.

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Here patient Joe with brush an' shovel groped smithereens
amidst the hovel, an' sends some drunk's unsteady
feet tae stagger on the totterin' street; the night
wears on. Ah, friends an' cronies o' my day, where are
ye gone?

Here wi' his own merry band, the jovial Imlach used tae
staun, protected like some heirloom locket - he had a
bottle in his pocket, some fiery stuff wad roose the
devil an' sudden Wars 'twixt Good an' Evil.

Mandoline and concertina, Grimes' rollin' eye transfixed
on Gina, the liltin' voices o' the throng rise with
an old sea-shanty song. Bush-bearded Vinnie holds the
wand - there's yin or twa can barely staun.

Wee Peter Feeney a glass the worse looks for pills
tae 'feed the horse' - man's friend now sunk so low
you'll see its shoes alone he'll guarantee. He damns
the polis, tho quite aware tae every word they're
listenin' there.

A wee bit rhymer tells his lays o' Croppy Boys an'
Rebel days, an' hopes through clouds o' smoke an'
beers than Mankind's sense o' Truth appears.

Outside, cold stars shine on the city. Inside a
world o' warmth an' pity - generous hands for a'
their sins wad fill the old age pensioners tins -
Of such, Old Scotia had her share, aye, aiblins mair
than onywhere.

And cam here upstarts o' the Clyde, we douced their
zeal an' damped their pride, spared not conceit nor
foolish fancies, but in the wake o' Poosie Nancy's,
the 'King or Country' raised nae cheer, we a' were
jolly beggars here.

The night must pass. Big Rab quick reaches for his
glass. The Clutha seek the 'rocky road', tae totter
hame tae their abode, while Willie Allan looks
aghast tae think the hours ha'e flown past. The

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crowd now spates out on the street an' soon
the silence is complete.

Many years have long passed on, since Scotia
and its folk hae gone," and here the old man
drew his breath. "Many, many sunk in death.
Lads an' lassies o' the Clyde, ebbin' lives
jist like the tide! Some an' earthly fame
acquired - some no higher rank aspired, children
of a toilin' race, who can ever tak your place -
the night wears on - Friends an' cronies o'
my day, where are ye gone?"

On W. B. Yeats

Here in the shadows of a vast city,
 My thoughts return to Ireland,
 And I see the Swan of Cool in her domain,
 Beside her, Yeats - his bardic crown
 Let wisely down in careful disarray,
 His flowing shirt and quaint, curt, mimic lip.
 He interests me in the manner of his poetry.

This man could hold the stage
 In an island where buffoonery is great;
 He could decide the fate of Letters,
 And poets living and poets still unborn
 Would have to pause and pick
 The fairy thorn from out their feet,
 He made the old Romance of Ireland so complete.

There in the Sligo hills, long will he lie,
 The Horseman and the hunted pass him by,
 And by the ancient sands of Lissadil,
 The heirs of feud and famine are weeping still.

*The Calton Martyrs
of 1787*

Version 2

The scarlet-lairds of the Tron have worried looks!
 Their counting-books tell the story
 All the old glory and gain from America
 Has passed with her Independence,
 And what none of them foresaw
 The ebb of wealth at Broomielaw.
 Old furious Finlay whacked his drum
 And begged for volunteers to come,
 He'd crush America.

The pipe-dream lasted but a day,
 They'd have to find some other way
 Restore their losses,
 These hard-faced men were never born
 To carry crosses.
 Some other victim must be found
 On Mungo's ancient hallowed ground
 For their assault.

The weavers' wages sank so low,
 The struggle soon began to grow
 And just complaint;
 To see their families go bare,
 Wives worn down with want and care
 Would tax a saint.
 In protest at their heavy load,
 These angry men then took the road
 And cut the webs
 Of those who would betray their fight,
 And with their enemies unite,
 Despised black-nebs!

The papers roared with arrogance,
 "Hot-heads! Deep in league with France!"

Which 'Christian' America had scorched with napalm;
Now returned home from that wicked war,
Was this the great Freedom that they had fought for?

Unemployed queues, grief and despair,
All these in lavish abundance are there!
Men are 'free' to shoot Presidents, gun down Luther King,
They are 'free' in that Land for any darn thing.
'Protect Vital Interests' becomes their War cry,
But their Cause is a sham and their slogan a lie!

In the midst of this morass, this scene of dismay,
Liberty went to the White House one day -
This millionaires' haunt where the rich reign supreme,
And a nightmare create from America's dream;
In the art of destruction they are past-masters,
With Star Wars and germs and nuclear disasters!

Liberty in horror heard these 'men of state'
Plan for mass murder and call it debate.
"For shame!" she cried out, she was met with their glares,
She was battered and bruised and kicked down the stairs!
Limping and lame to New York she returned
But Liberty's anger within her still burned!
She climbed on her pedestal and that's why to this day
You'll find her back turned on the 'free' U.S.A.

The Real Terrorist

Mr. Reagan screws up his ugly ham-actor's face.
He says the Russians are a disgrace
To the civilisation that he knows
And mock sincere the liar blows
A trumpet for the U.S.A.
A bloated Nation in decay,
Murders, muggings, dope and rape!
Astounded, Frankenstein would gape
At such a vile, a wicked creature
The brute is writ in every feature.
In the mirror Reagan will find
One source of Terror to Mankind.

Song of the Scab

I'll sing you a song of the slippery scab,
 a slimey creature from the first,
 of all things crawling on the globe
 assuredly the very worst;
 a snivelling toad and creeping jesus
 more spineless spunk you never met -
 come across the creature once
 and you'll wish to soon forget
 that boss's yes-man, judas sly,
 who hopes by crawling through a crisis
 that the world will pass him by!

The Orra Man

When Adam oot o' heaven
 was hounded for his sin,
 he knew not where on this wide earth
 his labours to begin;
 to leave him thus bewildered
 was never in God's plan,
 so He took a pickle wad o' dirt
 and made the orra man.

O the orra man's a marvel,
 the blessing o' mankind
 he serves the needs o' ane and a'
 in every race and clime.
 O the orra man's essential
 to fill and bile the can,
 to sweep and brush and muck the byre
 we need the orra man.

Your poor oul' maw is wearied oot,
 she's never off her feet,
 wi' making beds an' grub for all
 she seldom gets a seat;
 she cleans the shoes, she polishes,
 she scours the pots and pans,
 she'll tell you what's it like to be
 the poor old orra man.

Man launches into outer space,
 and robots multiply
 fantastic whigmalerie gigs
 now sail the starry sky;
 wonders great we will create,
 but try the best we can,
 there's nae machine we'll make to match,
 the good auld orra man.

When climbers conquered Everest,
 they made that grand ascension,

with sturdy will on hearts of oak
and an orra man called Tensing.
I'll praise the independent soul
yet show me him who can
sincerely say, he did it all,
without the orra man.

AT GLASGOW CROSS

AT GLASGOW CROSS

The Scabs O' Nottingham

Deep in Nottingham Forest,
Long, long years ago,
There dwelt a kindly outlaw
A goodly man we know,
But the wealthy hounded Robin
And as penance for that crime,
Few good are seen in Nottingham
Ever since that time!

No, we aren't working miners,
We're just scabs,
And we'll take what Maggie Thatcher
Has for grabs.
We are cowards, clowns and creeps,
We're just Uriah Heaps,
We aren't working miners,
We are scabs!

Robin had feathered arrows,
And graceful was their flight,
The only feather that we own
Is the one that's coloured white.
Robin's men wore Lincoln Green,
Such colours we do lack,
Yea, all, except the yellow streak
That's running down our back.

Robin robbed the greedy rich
And helped to feed the poor
But scabs like us crawl to the rich
And of this you may be sure.
I know that deep in Nottingham,
There's miners, men o' grit,
But not a single man o' them,
Goes scabbing down the pit.

The Sword of Damocles

Fortunate children, not the starving
 Laugh and play in the sun
 And there is fun in plenty for the few,
 But those of us with something more to do
 Are deep concerned -
 The rich have learned no lesson from the past
 And stand aghast at any Peace proposal.

Long, long before the Soviets arose,
 Spain, France and Britain had made Imperial foes;
 For centuries they plunged us into War,
 While they from afar, have reaped the gain of Greed,
 Creating havoc and universal need
 In every land,
 Plundered, ravaged each corner of the globe
 And donned the lying robe of innocence;
 They came to 'civilise the horde'?
 They came to murder millions with the sword,
 "To quell the natives", use any wicked libel
 To loot their lands and leave them with the Bible.

Long, long before the Soviet name was heard,
 The Indian and the Negro slave both shared
 The Whip and Chain, tormented lives to live,
 Or flee their homes, poor trembling fugitives.
 The Tyrant has not changed
 But merely re-arranged his arsenal!

Instead of Whip and Chain and Hanging-rope,
 He's found new source of hope in Atom-bombs;
 Yet still he fears his end,
 For no true man of conscience is his friend.
 Groping with rage, uncertain, blind,
 His last great card -
 The blackmail of Mankind.

National Affront

We've crept out from the rat-holes,
 We've crawled out from the sewers,
 A band of racist hoodlums, thugs and evil-doers;
 We march the streets of England,
 Protected by strange laws
 That permit a brood of Nazis
 To parade a vicious cause.

We scoff the grief of mothers
 Who sacrificed their sons,
 Brave lads who fell at Arnhem
 In their fight against the Huns;
 We sneer at all the Buchenwalds,
 The gassings and the rack,
 For we hide the bloody swastika
 Behind the Union Jack.

Where are your Burma veterans now?
 Your men of Alamein,
 As we scum spit on the crosses
 Of your comrades who were slain?
 Where is your gallant army,
 Your Air Force and your Fleets
 When we Fascists march through England
 And desecrate your streets?

The Lord's Lament

The Lord gazed down from heaven
 Upon the U.S.A.
 And even he who once made Hell,
 Recoiled in dark dismay.

He saw the frightened cities
 Where muggers stalked the night;
 He heard the 'Skid Row' desolates
 Decry their hideous plight.

He saw the Wall Street bankers
 Swell out with endless Greed,
 Billions spend on War and Hate,
 Ignoring human need.

He heard the White House liars
 Promote the Bankers' plan,
 Then brazenly describe their Cause,
 The 'Liberty of Man'.

He heard these hawks of Washington
 Discard their 'Peace' disguise,
 And clamouring for a War Crusade,
 Bombard the world with lies.

And looking down upon the Bay,
 He saw the dying flame
 As Liberty blew out her torch
 And hung her head in shame.

And then a hideous, mushroom cloud
 Enveloped night and morn
 And humans cursed in agony
 The hour they were born.

He heard a frenzied choir sing
 With 'patriotic' glee,
 "God bless America"

The Land of the Free.

The Lord, in anger, shook his head
 This wickedness to see -
 Them asking for His hand to bless
 Such vile profanity.

AT GLASGOW CROSS

To the Scabs

Are you prepared to help bring on
Your wives and children's tears,
As rich drones drive the nation back
To bitter years?

Are you prepared to kneel and bear
Their arrogance and might,
Your wretched soul to sneak away,
Betray the workers' fight?

Are you prepared to see rents rise
And living standards fall,
And turn the yellow, coward streak,
When our back is to the wall?

And do you need the masters' Press,
That mass of mindless bunk,
Out-pourings from the servile pen
Of some degenerate skunk?

Then 'twas your sort made Hitler God,
And right up to your door
Leads the dark, the crooked path
Of evils gone before.

Each time we triumph in the Fight
You cowards sought to lose,
To share the fruits of Victory,
Not one of you refuse.

Oh, shine a day upon this Land,
When the scales are turned about, -
In what cavern you may crawl,
We still shall find you out!

AT GLASGOW CROSS

Neither Red Nor Dead

Neither Red nor dead, just plain duped
Has been the people's fate
Since nineteen-forty-five,
When out of the cauldron hell of War,
The lucky ones came home alive.

The bosses' Press never lies -
It never lies still, you mean.
While you're debating,
It's fabricating, frantic and furious,
Like Goebbels did,
To put the lid on peace and human progress;
These spineless hacks bend easy backs,
Howk in the cess-pool of their mind
For every evil way to block
The forward movement of Mankind.

Soldiers,
You came home, glad it was over
And the home fires burning.
You landed at Dover,
A faceless one then passed you in the street,
Going the other way,
His mission - to repeat the grim performance!
With lies and hate and fear
To corrupt the atmosphere,
And like a demon conjuror, weave the absurd,
Make Peace a dark, despised, suspicious word.

And Why?

When Revolutions sweep the Earth,
And effort, not mere rank of birth
Or riches can determine worth,
When in their last citadels,
The tyrants here the tolling bells,
Then in the gloom,
The craven cowards crawl and quail,

And hope that nuclear blackmail
Averts their doom.

Pretending fear of Soviet might,
They really dread they'll lose the right
To rob the poor;
Thus they gamble with our lives,
Hoping Capitalism survives
And lies endure!

AT GLASGOW CROSS

AT GLASGOW CROSS

War Fever

The hollow drums are beating
And the stupid wave their flags
And a tiger-faced old General
Sticks out his chest and brags;
They don't think of the horror
Or the homes they desolate,
For their minds are filled with poison
And their hearts destroyed with hate.



When After Armageddon

When after Armageddon
 And you answer to the Lord,
 "Did you ever try to convert
 The ploughshare from the sword?"
 Will you stand with mouth a-gaping,
 Eyes rolling in the head -
 "I was busy, Lord, a-busking,
 I was out there, winning bread.
 As the war-clouds gathered round us
 In the dark'ning's storms increase,
 I just couldn't see the way, Lord,
 To join the fight for Peace."

But the inner voice of conscience
 Will hear the children's cry,
 "You left us to our fate, man,
 For you didn't even try!"

When after Armageddon,
 Will you snigger at the good
 Who have sacrificed their comfort
 For the stricken multitude,
 Who when you were gleaning riches
 Or merely crawling by,
 Strove to make this world a garden
 In a free and open sky?
 Will you shrug your wretched shoulders,
 And the old excuse pursue,
 "With the forces lined against us,
 Oh, Lord, what could I do?"

And the inner voice of conscience
 Will hear the children cry,
 "You've left us to our fate, man,
 For you didn't even try!"

When after Armageddon,
 Will the smirk be in your mirth,

When the Lord draws back the curtain
 And we gaze at planet Earth
 That is freed from poison gases
 In a mantle of pure green,
 A world of joy and wonder
 Which could easily have been
 Had the likes of you stood upright
 With a staunch, courageous mind
 In the fight for human Freedom
 And Peace for all Mankind.



Maggie Meets Her Match

Maggie Thatcher died one day
and with her neck of brass,
she thought that through those Pearly Gates
that she was bound to pass.

St. Peter slammed the Gates tight shut
and stopped her with a grin,
"Now if I open up for you,
the Devil I let in.

And Heaven is the home for souls
who've done good, kindly things;
the likes of you has never earned
a harp or angel's wings.

Look, how you stopped the children's milk,
but don't you seem well fed,
a fitter corpse I never saw
for one who should be dead."

St. Peter read the Doomsday Book,
he read the pages through,
"Oh Maggie, I see Tory tykes,
but none can match with you.

You helped the rich get richer,
you trod upon the poor,
and heaven has no time for you,
not even at the door.

You raised the prices in the shops,
the Unions you'd destroy,
and heaven's such a friendly place
of Peace and Love and Joy."

St. Peter had another look,
"My God, you're quite a witch!
Your hair, it may be fair," he said,

"but your deeds are black as pitch.

You tried to ban the Olympic Games
and spoil the world of sport!
Oh, Maggie, we've no halo here
for any of your sort.

But if it's War and Hate you want,
a place to suit you well -
those hotter regions down below
where you can kick up hell."

So Maggie had to take her bags
way down that Golden Stair
but Old Nick stood with his pitch-fork
and stopped her coming there.

"Ah, Maggie, we have heard of you,
from every kind of source,
and though our hell's a wicked place,
you'd make it ten times worse."

Now, Maggie wanders round the world,
still burdened down with sin,
for Pete and Nick are not the fools
who voted Maggie in.

AT GLASGOW CROSS

Nor innocence nor laughter spare,
 It heeds not children's cries;
 The lily of the valley's crushed
 By callous profit's plan,
 And mothers weep as their young ones sleep
 In the vale of Aberfan.

AT GLASGOW CROSS
The Millionaire's Prayer

O Lord above protecting all
 Thy favoured creatures great and small,
 Surely Thou must understand
 Now is the time to show Thine hand,
 For down upon this earth of ours
 Old Satan wields his wicked powers
 Poor folk to sway -
 The worker will not doff his cap
 And be the meek and servile chap
 Of yesterday!

And Lord, them nippers just left school,
 They have not learned that golden rule,
 Do what they're told;
 They neither go to church or kirk
 But demonstrate their right to work
 And jobs to hold,
 Lord God, to think it's come to pass
 This spirit in the working class
 Come to a head,
 Demanding now their wages just -
 What downright greed and selfish lust!
 I quake with dread.

And women too.
 Them brazen hussies take the street
 With other hecklers to compete -
 It makes me rue
 The day we opened up the vote
 And let the rule of petticoat
 Loom into view!

And Jesus Christ, them coloured folk!
 How dare they spurn the ancient yoke
 Of slavery!
 How dare they clamour for their rights
 And claim they're just as good as whites
 What utter drive!

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AT GLASGOW CROSS

O for the galleys on the mains!
O for the good old whips and chains!
I'd make them snivel.

But, Lord, my chief and direst woe
To see the Soviet influence grow!
Them Russians give me such a fright,
I shake and shiver through the night -
Such terror overwhelms me
To hear them preach equality,
And why should Peace my profits mar
When all my riches come from War?
O Lord, I beg you on my hunkers,
Provide us rich with deeper bunkers!
What odds the poor run helter-skelter
And find the grave their only shelter!
Let them endure the scorching blast -
Were they not born to be down-cast?

O gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Don't even spare one Russian child,
The old, the crippled or the blind -
Leave not a single soul behind!
Lord, give me big and bigger bombs
To smash them into wee atoms!
Prostrate them, Lord, and lay them low!
Destroy their cities in one blow!
By this, my God, you'll surely see
My caring Christianity.

But, Lord, safeguard my dividends,
And I'll count you among my friends!
Maintain a class-divided Earth!
Mid common-folk restore our worth,
So that sweet luxury and pomp
Continue on its royal romp!
Safeguard our banks! Our coffers fill
And make it seem 'Divine Will'!
Do this, O Lord, and I shall be
Thine servant for Eternity,
But should you fail me in the end,
I know I've Satan for a friend!

AT GLASGOW CROSS

A Letter From an American
Convict to President Reagan

(Supporting his determination to keep the world 'free')

Dear Mister President,
I'm in here for a bit of a spell,
and, well, it's given me time to think things over -
Lord knows I ain't exactly sitting in clover -
but I've got a conscience and when I heard your speech,
it sure did reach me, like I was most over-come,
it moved me some, that bit about Freedom
our willingness to die, just summed it all up -
I had a wet eye all the time listening.
I said, "This guy knows what he's ranting about",
and then I smiled, "Who knows but he's been up
the river himself for a while? He understands
what it means to get landed in trouble."

Well, Mr President, I want you to know
We're with you, me and the boys,
and I ain't no small noise here. I count some.
Keep America free! That's what we say.
We'll fight for our right to be free any damn day.
We'll even die for it - yeah, here and now,
(Al and Pete are going to the gas-block anyhow,
so they're not chicken!) The sooner you quicken
the War the better - let the Red bastards see
that we'd rather be dead than lose our liberty.
I'm in here for rape and assault, a few things beside,
but I swear, Mr President, I still can carry my pride,
I'm a true, full-blooded American, I'll fight to the ditch
'gainst any god-damn-Communist-son-of-a-bitch,
doesn't know what it means to be free,
out of chains, enjoying sweet liberty,
each one for himself, against everyone else,
a true son of a
ah, Jesus, I wish I had a gun!

Hitler Meets Franco in Hell

"Sieg Heil! And so you've come at last!
 You've found the way!
 But then I always knew you would some day."
 A bit of news.
 I've ousted Satan from his official post
 And you and I and Mussolini's ghost
 Can run the show down here -
 It's just a piece of cake -
 Like burning Reds and Jews for old time's sake,
 Gouging and garrotting without a word of fuss,
 Which makes this hell a heaven for the likes of us."

The old Bastard, Franco he took long to die.
 Some say the Man above prolonged his agony
 And stayed his end that in his final pain,
 Brave souls might pass the murdered sons of Spain.

Said Franco, "Adolf, dear, Fuehrer and friend!
 Your hari-kari drove me round the bend!
 What a delight to see you in your own,
 Unseat the very devil from his throne,
 And welcome me, one of that vile spawn
 Of European fascists, and last great holder-on!
 For my chances, when you left, I would not give a damn,
 But reprieve was soon forthcoming from dear old Uncle Sam.
 I gave him atom-bases, and he covered up my crimes
 (He had sins himself to answer for, aye, even worse at times).
 With friends like Ronald Reagan, McCarthy and Goldwater,
 Sure we didn't need you, Adolf, to lead us to the slaughter.
 So let's keep the fires burning, there's hope in hell as yet,
 When England's Queen has forwarded her message of regret.

Epitaph

Not even a crocodile cried
 When this beast died.

Elegy on a 'Great Man'

Behold the sycophantic crew
 all their dead-leaf laurels strew
 around his funeral bier!
 Deceit despite expressions wry:
 in their calculating eye
 no genuine tear.

He was not great,
 but one vast compound
 of hate and vanity,
 a ponderous tongue
 which made inanity seem profound
 to servile minds.

They saw in him
 a bulwark for their kind,
 not just survival, but power's sway
 that damned the nation
 to a long, long day
 of grief, corruption.

He was their God,
 replacing Truth by fraud
 and vile dexterity:
 he may be gone,
 but all the maggots bred in him
 live on.

On Churchill's Death

The ancient frauds all gather round
to lay us prostrate on the ground;
dukes and generals, kings and lords,
a puppet host with dangling swords,
money-mighty magnates too
and most of that low, lickspittle crew
disguised as 'labour' to deceive
join with their Tory friends to grieve
this propped-up fraud,
and Churchill hoist to heaven high
just next to God.

The trumpets of a crooked State
blare out the myth that he was great
and scoundrels now of all degrees
are everywhere upon their knees
to praise this man who merely meant
the evil which they represent,
who on himself took credit for
millions slaughtered in the War,
and full of phrases, pomp and pride,
betrayed the cause for which men died.

O grim John Bull,
in your declining, dithering days,
is this the idol that you raise,
Shakespeare compare?
Doltards, fools, gaze not up!
If he's in heaven no saint is there.

AT GLASGOW CROSS

A Poem for all Peoples

In ten million years to come, this small green world may join the boiling
sun,
And all the twinkling stars in high Evanish from the neighbouring sky!
Ten thousand years, the frost may creep, embrace Mankind in our last
sleep,
And nowhere in the void be heard, the voice of man or warbling bird.
Thus Nature may the final curtain draw, transform our joys to scenes of
grief and awe,

Whilst we, poor humans, have but a passing glance,
And ebb with the cruel tide of lost significance.

And yet we rose
From shaping crude rough stone
To polished marble in perfection,
From drawings on the wall of some dark cave
To rich engravings and great portraiture,
And with astonishing creation,
Endowed the countless generations,
Made ships of steel to sail the seven seas.
Harnessed mountain streams for electricity,
Walked on the moon and probed the Milky Way,
Brought worlds unknown into the light of day;
Music, Art and Medicine revealed their first vast store of Mankind's
brilliant deeds
with slightest thought of self or long-consuming greed.

Out of the caves we came,
Out of the forests and the mountain slopes,
And down upon a world we might well tame,
And founded there together our tribes
In earnest wish to find a better day,
Never dreaming much about tomorrow,
Though often grieving for our women's sorrow

and our own,
Even then caught up in a captive fraud;
We sailed upon a sea of senseless shame.
When priests and chiefs were made,

Yet now we know, yes now we know
When Capitalism presents its ultimatum,
When all the evil there ever was
Conspires at the cross-roads,
With bombs and rockets holds the world in terror,
Combining now the shameful errors of our history -
How we enslaved our fellow negro,
Committed the sacrilege of War in the name of God
And with a thousand frauds
Nigh sealed the ruin of our inner self.
We now have reached the point of total destruction
Or the liberation of the beauty in us.

AT GLASGOW CHURCH
The Sun-bright Flower
of Peace

Miner, comrade in the deep earth,
Peace through darkness radiant gleams,
And shining yet for your hands to shape
Are Mankind's treasured, untapped seams!
They stretch to days of human glory
Here upon the earth below,
The fields of grain away fair above,
The flag of Truth unfurled,
And you shall walk, new kinship chasing
The passing insults fools have hurled!

Give Peace her place in childhood's story,
The queen adored by all is she,

She walks their garden, all weeds wilting
Before her radiant modesty!
And such a queen will hold the class-room
In Summer cool and Winter warm,
And children, proud to walk beside her,
Will thank you with their young heart's charm.

Writer, artist, music-maker,
Unite with artisan and baker,
We still can save the Earth,
And all the power in our hearts
Must come to universal birth
At this most potent hour!
Then what was but a human wish
Shall be a multi-coloured flower,
A slender stem and tender leaf,
But, oh, what fragrance there,
Its blossom shall delight the heart
Of good folk everywhere.

Men and mothers of all nations,
Whatever rank whatever station,
Weave a garland o'er the globe
That Peace will wear that lovely robe
Among her sons!
Men of honour, men of worth,
Sinking low, or striving forth,
Peace can prove your labour's truth,
Renew your love, renew your youth
In days that dance ahead!
This Earth can soon aspire high
Where no tears need be shed,
But those of joy the day we've seen
The heart of Man forever green,
With Peace and Progress wed!

I see an international crowd
Of colours, faces, garments, creeds,
Place hatred in its burial shroud
And end the reign of Greed;
I see them linked from land to land
Across the seven seas,
Whilst in their midst the petals glow,

AT GLASGOW CROSS

The sun-bright Flower of Peace,
The shining flower, the lovely flower,
The sun-bright flower of Man,
With roots enriched by selfless deeds
Since history began;
That blossom grows in every land
It decks the earth with grace,
Enriching now the human heart
To save the human race.



Also by the author:

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